

## **DAVID J. AND ELGIVA EVANS THURMAN**

### **Lehi Centennial History 1850-1950**

The lives of David J. and Elgiva Evans Thurman were so intimately intertwined through fifty years that it would be difficult to separate them and tell two different stories. Together they struggled through the lean years of early pioneering in Lehi and labored to bring high ideals to the community. They were one in seeking better schooling for their own children and those of their associates. They always served as one and should not be parted even in a biography.

Born in Larue County, Kentucky, November 11, 1847, Mr. Thurman came to Lehi in 1869 and became a teacher in the old Thurman School.

Elgiva Evans was the second girl born in what is now Lehi, then called Evansville in honor of her grandfather, David Evans, the first bishop. Her father was Israel Evans, a member of the Mormon Battalion, who came to Utah by way of California. Her mother, Matilda Thomas, at sixteen, drove a carriage across the plains, arriving in Salt Lake in late 1847. As a child, Elgiva worked in the fields with her mother while her father was serving a mission in Wales.

Her girlhood was passed in hard work, sparse living, a few homemade pleasures and days of schooling in a log schoolhouse. She was nineteen when she met the young Kentuckian, D.J. Thurman. It was frank love on both sides and, in the face of parental opposition, she agreed to marry him.

On the way to cedar Fort, in a borrowed wagon, they met Bishop Rodeback coming to Lehi. Standing in his wagon, he performed the marriage ceremony as they faced him from thiers. It was later consecrated in the Salt Lake Endowment House.

The young couple went to Spanish Fork where Mr. Thurman taught school. At his brother William's death, David returned to Lehi and assumed the former's position as teacher. He operated his farm, worked in the Trane Mercantile Store, practiced law, and served on the Lehi Water Board and in many other capacities. The Thurman home became a center of cultural activity, of hospitality, and friendly festivity. They entertained many of the notables of the '80s and '90s, especially political figures since they were both ardent party workers.

To this union seven children were born. All but one entered teaching after graduation from the New West School and college work at the Brigham Young University and University of Utah. As this story is written, one, the youngest daughters is still in that service. The total contribution of this family to education has been about 215 years, nearly two-thirds of it in Lehi.

Soon after their Golden Wedding Anniversary in 1921, Mr. Thurman became ill and died that same year on September 21. Mrs. Thurman continued in the family home and to hold about her children and grandchildren, carrying out the strong family ties and love of home instilled in them from earliest years. She joined her Kentuckian in death, October 31, 1933. They sleep side by side in the shadow of the hills they loved and in the sunshine that brightened their days and warmed them as their own hearts warmed all who knew them.